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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OX CART



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

March 7, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Study of Options for Continuing Operation
of the OXCART Aircraft in Fiscal Year 1969

In accordance with your request, a study of the feasibility and cost of continuing operation of the OXCART aircraft beyond the currently programmed phaseout date of June 30, 1968 has been completed. Although a number of alternatives have been studied, I believe the following options are significant for your consideration:

Option 1. The OXCART aircraft would be transferred to the Strategic Air Command (SAC) by October 31, 1968. SAC operation of seven of these aircraft (six operationally configured plus one trainer) at current rates would begin by about January 1, 1969, with substitution of Air Force for contractor support wherever possible. The eighth (test) aircraft would be sent to Palmdale for continuing contractor test operation.

Option 2. The OXCART aircraft would be transferred to SAC as in Option 1 and the SAC SR-71 inventory would be reduced by eight SR-71's to be stored at Palmdale, starting September 1, 1968. Flying at current OXCART rates would begin by November 1, 1968.

Option 3. The OXCART aircraft would be retained under CIA operational control and management. [] would be closed and aircraft and other program assets would be transferred from [] to Beale Air Force Base by October 31, 1968. Substitution of some Air Force maintenance and other support for contractor support is assumed. Present OXCART flying rates would be resumed by January 1, 1969.

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USAF review(s) completed.

NRO review(s) completed.

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25X1 Option 4. Current OXCART operations would be continued at [] This is a base line option against which the costs of other options may be measured.

25X1 The costs of the options studied were derived for FY 1968 and 1969 on the basis of the best currently available data. These costs were necessarily estimates, since details of operating arrangements and contractor support would need to be worked out on the basis of more complete planning for implementation of any of these options. One factor affecting costs of options other than Option 4 (continuing CIA operation at []) was the need for additional facilities at Beale Air Force Base, including aircraft shelters, hangars, trailers and headquarters building. For purposes of cost estimation, it was assumed that the demountable units at [] could be moved to Beale Air Force Base and costs were included for site preparation, foundations and utilities required to accommodate these buildings. On-base housing for additional military personnel at Beale would also pose a problem in the long run, but this could not be resolved initially in any event on the schedules proposed for the phaseover options. Housing trailers from [] could help to alleviate this situation for either military or contractor personnel, and it was assumed these trailers would be made available.

The costs of the options are as follows:

	Additional FY 1968	Total FY 1969
Option 1	[]	[]
Option 2		
Option 3		
Option 4		

25X1 These costs include consideration of NRP costs for operation of the OXCART by the CIA, [] costs for operation of the OXCART (as appropriate in each option), CIA and [] direct support costs for each option, costs of closeout of [] for Options 1, 2 and 3 and costs of construction

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(including [] for additional military housing) at Beale Air Force Base for Options 1 and 3. The cost for closeout of [] will be incurred as an NRP cost in any event in FY 1969 under the current plan for phaseout of the OXCART program after June 30, 1968. The OXCART associated costs in Option 3 (SAC operation of the OXCART offset by removal of eight SR-71's from the inventory) have been reduced by [] to account for decreased SR-71 program cost. A more detailed breakdown of costs is given in the attached Table I. It should be noted that the FY 1969 costs for closing [] and for new construction at Beale Air Force Base are "one-time" costs; however, costs for years subsequent to FY 1969 cannot be derived by subtracting these one-time costs from the totals, since Options 1, 2 and 3 involve curtailment of OXCART operations to varying degrees during the period June 30, 1968 to January 1, 1969.

In order to provide comparative costs for these options corresponding to a full year of operation without one-time costs included, an estimate for FY 1970 costs is included in the attached Table II. In summary, the FY 1970 costs are estimated to be as follows:

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3
- Option 4



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The Air Force has reviewed the feasibility of options calling for operation of the OXCART aircraft by SAC, from the standpoint of training, maintenance, facilities at Beale Air Force Base, and contractor support and has concluded that the options and schedules described above are feasible. However, there are substantial differences in the configurations of the OXCART and SR-71 aircraft in the areas of cockpit, instruments, sensors, engines and airframe. If commonality in subsystems were to be sought between the two aircraft, considerable expenditure of time and money would be required for modification. Therefore, the options considered contemplate only the operation of the OXCART aircraft in their present configurations. This would require formation of specialized units within SAC capable of maintaining and operating the OXCART aircraft

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as is. Conversion of as much of the maintenance from contractor to military personnel will require substantial improvements in the technical data available for the OXCART aircraft; continuation of essentially the current level of contractor maintenance and overhaul services would be required until the SAC unit were manned and trained. However, because of the small number of OXCART aircraft and their special subsystems, the continuing level of contractor support would continue to be greater than that utilized for the SR-71. These factors were taken into account in estimating option costs.

Continuation of the OXCART program into FY 1969 under any of the options discussed herein will not only require additional procurement of spares, AGE and other equipment in the OXCART program, but will impact the SR-71 program, since up to [] of such items common to the SR-71 and OXCART programs have not been procured for the SR-71 in FY 1968, on the assumption that OXCART assets would become available in FY 1969. However, adoption of any of the options for the continued operation of the OXCART will call for adjustments of the allocation of assets and fund reimbursement between the OXCART and SR-71 programs. Our current assessment indicates that if such transfers of assets and outstanding reimbursement liabilities between programs are made, the net costs for FY 1968 and FY 1969 for any of the options may be reduced by between []

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Security would require special attention under all of the options calling for transfer of the OXCART aircraft to Beale Air Force Base. The most difficult problems would arise in connection with Option 3, in which the CIA would continue to operate the aircraft at Beale Air Force Base. This option has not been reviewed with the CIA, and if implemented, might require additional buildings and other facilities at Beale Air Force Base, not included in the present cost estimates, in the interest of maintaining security separation between the OXCART and the SR-71 programs at Beale Air Force Base. Options 1 to 3, however, all call for development of a plausible explanation for the surfacing of these additional aircraft, differing in configuration

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from either the YF-12A or the SR-71. These security problems have not been addressed in the current study but would require detailed attention if implementation of any of Options 1 through 3 were contemplated.

NRO 25X1 NRO

Alexander H. Flax
Director

2 Attachments

Table I FY 68 and FY 69

Program Costs

Table II FY 70 Program
Costs

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